



Department of State

TELEGRAM

ACTION COPY

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O 061320Z NOV 69
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7502
BT
~~SECRET~~ TEL AVIV 4196

Control: 1242Q
Recd : 6 Nov 69
12:32 p.m.

*Tel Aviv 4196
11/6/69*

AV 12 215

NR Pol 27-7 Arab-ISR

~~NOBIS~~

SUBJECT: TWA HIJACKING

1. DIRGEN MFA RAFAEL CALLED IN DCM MORNING NOV 6 TO PROVIDE INFO TO USG THAT GOI HAS DECIDED TO GO ALONG WITH A THREE-CORNERED SCHEME INVOLVING UAR TO BRING ABOUT RELEASE OF ISRAELI TWA PASSENGERS DETAINED IN DAMASCUS.
2. RAFAEL SAID THAT GOI HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN DISCUSSING POW EXCHANGE WITH UAR THROUGH ICRC. SOME TIME AGO, ICRC APPROACHED GOI ON BEHALF UAR WITH STATEMENT UAR WOULD RELEASE ONE ISRAELI PILOT THEN HELD IF ISRAEL WOULD RELEASE UAR PILOT HELD HERE PLUS GROUP OF SEVENTEEN OR SO EGYPTIANS LEFTOVER IN ISRAELI HANDS SINCE 1967 WAR. ISRAEL AGREED, BUT NASSER ILLNESS AND CHANGES IN UAR HIGH COMMAND INTERVENED AND THERE WAS NO ACTION ON UAR SIDE. IN MEANTIME, UAR HAD CAPTURED A SECOND ISRAELI PILOT.
3. THREE OF FOUR DAYS AGO, ICRC REP IN UAR BOISSART HAD COME TO ISRAELIS IN GENEVA WITH NEW EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL APPROVED AT QUOTE HIGHEST LEVEL UNQUOTE. UAR WOULD RETURN TWO ISRAELI PILOTS IF ISRAEL WOULD HAND OVER TO UAR THE EGYPTIAN PILOT, SEVENTEEN POWS FROM SIX DAY WAR, CREWS OF TWO FISHING VESSELS RECENTLY CAPTURED IN ISRAELI TERRITORIAL WATERS, ELEVEN EGYPTIAN CIVILIANS RECENTLY BROUGHT BACK FROM RAID ON UAR, AND, AS CONDITION SINE QUA NON, THE TWO SYRIAN PILOTS. PACKAGE WOULD THUS TOTAL FIFTY-NINE ENEMY FOR TWO ISRAELI PILOTS. ICRC REP ADDED IN HIS OWN NAME THAT HE ASSUMED, OF COURSE, THAT INCLUSION OF TWO SYRIAN PILOTS IN PACKAGE WOULD MEAN THAT TWO ISRAELI TWA PASSENGERS WOULD HAVE TO BE RELEASED IN ADVANCE AS A UNILATERAL GESTURE WITHOUT ANY CONNECTION WITH POW EXCHANGE, AND POW EXCHANGE WOULD THEN TAKE PLACE AFTERWARD.
4. RAFAEL SAID USG KNEW HOW EXTENSIVE GOI EFFORTS HAD BEEN TO GAIN RELXSE OF ISRAELIS FROM DAMASCUS. SO FAR THERE HAD BEEN NO RESULTS. GOI WOULD STILL BE DELIGHTED IF USG COULD SAY THAT THEY WILL BE UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASED, BUT UNDERSTOOD USG EFFORTS HAD NOT PRODUCED SUCH ASSURANCE. NO RESULTS FROM UN APPROACHES. MEANTIME, ICRC REPORTS ONE

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DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 22, 2004

-2- Tel Aviv 7502, 6 Nov 69

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ISRAELI PILOT IN SERIOUS CONDITION. IN VIEW IMPORTANCE ISRAELIS ACCORD HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF SUCH CASES, GOI HAS DECIDED TO TAKE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROPOSAL MAD THROUGH ICRC GENEVA AND HAS SO INFORMED ICRC.

5. RAFAEL SAID PACKAGE AS REQUIRED BY UAR WILL BE DELIVERED BY ISRAEL, TOUT COMPRIS, BUT ISRAEL WILL REQUIRE PRIOR UNILATERAL RELEASE OF ISRAELIS BY DAMASCUS AND EXCHANGE OF ALL THREE ISRAELIS IN UAR HANDS.

6. RAFAEL WENT ON TO SAY GOI STILL GREATLY DISAPPOINTED THAT EFFORTS OF US, UN, ETC. HAD NOT BROUGHT ABOUT RELEASE OF DETAINED ISRAELIS. ALTHOUGH HE WAS SURE THAT SYRIA HAD PROMPTED UAR TO INCLUDE TWO SYRIAN PILOTS IN UAR LIST, THERE WAS AS YET NO CLEAR STATEMENT THAT SYRIANS WERE PREPARED TO RELEASE ISRAELIS, THSI BEING ONLY ASSUMPTION OF ICRC MAN. GOI WOULD APPRECIATE ALL POSSIBLE EFFORTS BY USG NOW TO ASSIST IN BRINGING QUOTE WHOLE SORDID AFFAIR UNQUOTE TO CONCLUSION. HE HOPED WASHINGTON QUOTE WOULD ROLL UP SLEEVES UNQUOTE AND USE ITS INFLUENCE TO GET PROPOSAL AGREED ALL AROUND. SAID GOI HAD TALKED WITH NO ONE OTHER THAN ICRC, SINCE QUOTE ITALY IS OPERATING ON US BEHALF, NOT GOI BEHALF UNQUOTE. TAFANEL INDICATEC GOI WAS READY TO MOVE AT MOMENT'S NOTICE. IF WORD RECEIVED THAT TWO ISRAELIS HAD GOTTEN OUT TO GREECE OR GYPRUS, FOR INSTANCE, EXCHANGE WITH EGYPTIANS COULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

7. DCM TOLD RAFAEL HE WAS SURE WASHINGTON WOULD AGREE THAT GOI WAS DOING RIGHT THING IN ACCEPTING DEAL FOR RELEASE OF ISRAELI TWA PASSENGERS. ASKED, HOWEVER, WHY GOI HAD BEEN WILLING TO GO INTO THIS LARGE PACKAGE DEAL THROUGH UAR WHEN IT HAD BEEN SO ADAMANT AGAINST A SIMPLE TWO-FOR-TWO SWAP DIRECTLY WITH SYRIANS. RAFAEL REPLIED GOI WAS STILL FIRM AGAINST ANY DIRECT SWAP OF SYRIAN POWS FOR INNOCENT CIVILIANS. FACT THAT SYRIAN PILOTS WOULD ON FACE BE EXCHANGED FOR ISRAELI MILITARY BEING HELD BY UAR, PLUS ADDITION TO PACKAGE OF NUMBER OF EGYPTIAN CIVILIANS HELD BY ISRAEL, WOULD ALLOW GOI TO AGREE TO PACKAGE DEAL WITHOUT FEELING THAT ITS BASIC PRINCIPLE WAS BEING VIOLATED.

8. IN CONCLUSION, RAFAEL STRESSED NEED FOR ABSOLUTE SECRECY TO AVOID ANY PUBLIC DEBATE IN ISRAEL IN ADVANCE OF EXCHANGE AND TO AVIOD ANY POSSIBILITY OF DEAL FALLING THROUGH. GP-3.

BARBOUR

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NODIS REVIEW	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cat. A	Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC
<input type="radio"/> Cat. B	Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S
<input type="radio"/> Cat. C	Caption and custody retained by S/S
Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Witman, II	
Date: 4/24 1975	